

Suicides in Vidarbha

417. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:

SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI:

KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 60 farmers have committed suicide in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra during the last two months;

(b) if so, the reasons and details in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Prime Minister's special relief for the farmers to the tune of Rs.37,500 crore have not been utilized and distributed to the debt-hit farmers; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the action taken by Government to take remedial steps in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) As per the information furnished by the Government of Maharashtra, up to 30.01.2007, 74 suicides by farmers have been reported from the Vidarbha region during 2007.

Broadly, the causes of suicide by farmers, as reported by the Government of Maharashtra, are indebtedness, crop loss and social and economic insecurity.

(c) and (d) The Government of India has sanctioned a rehabilitation package of Rs.3873.26 crore for six districts of Vidarbha region in Maharashtra. It is being implemented over a period of three years. This includes both subsidy/grant and loan component. Various items of assistance include *ex-gratia* assistance from Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF), interest waiver, assured irrigation, seed replacement, watershed development, micro irrigation, horticulture development, extension services, and subsidiary income services. As per the available information, the releases for implementation of the rehabilitation package in Maharashtra is about Rs. 1530 crore.